

## CHAPTER 7.0 ALTERNATIVES

CEQA requires the consideration of alternative development scenarios and the analysis of impacts associated with the alternatives. Through comparison of these alternatives to the proposed project, the advantages of each can be weighed and analyzed. Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR “shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives” (Section 15126.6(a)).

Additionally, sections 15126.6(e) and 15126.6(f) of the Guidelines state:

- The specific alternative of “no project” shall also be evaluated along with its impact. If the environmentally superior alternative is the “no project” alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.
- The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a “rule of reason” that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Of those alternatives, the EIR need examine in detail only the ones that the lead agency determines could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project. The range of feasible alternatives shall be selected and discussed in a manner to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision making.

Pursuant to the guidelines stated above, a range of alternatives to the proposed project is considered and evaluated in this EIR. These alternatives were developed in the course of project planning and environmental review, and reflect project objectives. The discussion in this section provides:

1. A description of alternatives considered.
2. An analysis of whether the alternatives meet most of the basic objectives of the project.

3. A comparative analysis of the alternatives under consideration and the proposed project. The focus of this analysis is to determine if alternatives are capable of eliminating or reducing the significant environmental effects of the project to a less than significant level. **Table 7.0-1** provides a summary of this analysis.

**Table 7.0-1**  
**Summary Comparison of Project Alternatives to Proposed Project**

<b>Impact Category</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b> NP: No Development Alternative	<b>Alternative 2</b> NP: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, HCP Alternative	<b>Alternative 3</b> Biological Open Space Alternative
Land Use and Planning	*	*	*
Transportation/Circulation	Less	Similar	Less
Air Quality	Less	Similar	Less
Noise	Less	Similar	Less
Paleontological Resources	Less	Similar	Similar
Biological Resources	Less	Similar	Less
Hydrology/Water Quality	Less	Similar	Less
Geology and Soils	Less	Similar	Less
Hazards	Less	Similar	Less
Visual Aesthetics/Grading	*	*	*
Public Services and Utilities	*	*	*
Global Climate Change	Less	Similar	Less
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Environmentally Superior to the proposed project</b>	<b>Environmentally Similar to the proposed project</b>	<b>Environmentally Superior to the proposed project</b>

NP = No Project

Less = impact of the project alternative is less than impact of proposed project

Similar = impact of project alternative is similar to impact of proposed project

Greater = impact of project alternative is greater than impact of proposed project

\* = No significant impact identified for the proposed project

## Objectives for the Project

- Strengthen the City's tax base through sales and property taxes and provide increased shopping and job opportunities for local residents.
- Ensure that the surrounding residential areas are adequately served by a commercial center that fulfills daily shopping needs, which will minimize the length of local vehicular

trips and encourage transit use, which include convenience goods, food, and personal services in accordance with the La Costa Master Plan.

- Unify land uses by setting forth design guidelines and an implementation program that creates a unique and distinctive sense of place and identity for the community and is consistent with the City's Landscape Manual.
- Conform to and implement the City's Growth Management Program and HCP/OMSP and conform to the General Plan after a minor land use boundary amendment and its associated policies and goals.
- Offer safe, attractive, well-balanced residential areas with a range of housing types, styles, and price levels in a variety of locations, which are compatible with surrounding areas.
- Provide open space features onsite for the benefit of residents and neighboring communities to support active and passive recreation opportunities and a high-quality living environment.
- Allow for walkability features for pedestrian access to the site and bicycle linkages to the surrounding communities through a logical connection of trails, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities.
- Comply with the provisions of Carlsbad Municipal Code Section 21.85.040 by providing the required number of affordable housing units offsite.
- Develop a plan that is sensitive to existing hillside areas, balances earthwork, and provides contour grading where feasible to minimize visual impacts from surrounding public viewing areas.
- Enhance employment opportunities for the City through the creation of construction- and commercial-related jobs that are fully integrated into the community.
- Encourage sustainability in design to foster "green" development that reduces project energy needs and water consumption.
- Improve the water quality of site runoff through sustainable design features, such as a natural bioswale.

Alternatives were designed to generally meet the same project objectives as feasibly as possible. The proposed project would have significant impacts to transportation/circulation, air quality, noise, paleontological resources, biological resources, hydrology/water quality, geology and soils, hazards, and global climate change. The following environmental areas would not be able to be reduced to a level of less than significant, with all feasible mitigation incorporated: transportation/circulation, air quality, noise, and global climate change. The following environmental areas would not have a significant impact through implementation of the proposed project and would not need to be analyzed under each alternative: land use and planning, visual aesthetics/grading, and public services and utilities.

The alternatives discussed below are intended to reduce or avoid the significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed project.

### **Alternatives Being Considered**

The alternatives considered in this EIR include:

1. Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative: No Development
2. Alternative 2 – No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative
3. Alternative 3 – Biological Open Space Alternative

### **Alternatives Considered but Rejected**

#### Alternative Location

An EIR is typically required to analyze an offsite project alternative. Section 15126(f)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines states, in part, that the “key question and first step in analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need to be considered for inclusion in the EIR.” However, for this EIR, City of Carlsbad staff members have determined that there is no feasible offsite alternative location for the project. The City employed a 5-minute drive time from the project site to

evaluate locations suitable for a commercial shopping center and mixed-use project of the same size to adequately serve the needs of the community. The survey found no other vacant commercially designated sites in the vicinity that could accommodate the size of the project.

#### No Commercial Development

The No Commercial Development Alternative concept assumes that the proposed commercial parcel would remain undeveloped, natural open space, and the single-family and multifamily residential parcels would be developed similar to the proposed project. This alternative was determined to be infeasible because it does not meet several core objectives of the project, including strengthening and diversifying the City's tax base; providing an area available to the surrounding community that fulfills daily shopping needs and minimizes local trips; enhancing employment opportunities through construction and commercial-related jobs; and conforming to the La Costa Master Plan, which designated the site for local commercial development to serve the La Costa community. Therefore, this alternative was rejected from further consideration.

#### High-Density Residential Only Development

The High-Density Residential Only Development assumes that, in addition to the proposed program for development of the multifamily and commercial parcels, high-density multifamily development would instead be planned for the proposed single-family residential parcel. However, this alternative was determined to be infeasible because it would not provide the proper balance of housing types as seen in the surrounding community. Furthermore, it would not conform to the Master Plan and General Plan vision of low-medium residential development on this site, could cause greater population and related infrastructure requirements to provide services to the area than are available, and would not be consistent with the City's Growth Management Program. This alternative would not meet the project objectives of offering safe, attractive, well-balanced residential areas with a range of housing types, styles, and price levels in a variety of locations that are compatible with surrounding areas. Therefore, this alternative was rejected from further consideration.

### Office Space Development on Proposed Multifamily Residential Parcels

The Office Space Development Alternative concept assumes that the proposed multifamily residential parcel would instead be planned for office space development on the 9.9-acre area. However, this alternative was determined to be infeasible because it would not provide the increased diversity in housing options envisioned for the site available to a wide range of incomes. Furthermore, it would not meet the proposed project objectives of complying with Carlsbad Municipal Code Section 21.85.040 by offering safe, attractive, well-balanced residential areas with a range of housing types, styles, and price levels in a variety of locations that are compatible with surrounding areas. Therefore, this alternative was rejected from further consideration.

### **No Project Alternative**

According to CEQA Section 15126.6(e), the No Project Alternative shall be evaluated along with the proposed project. The No Project Alternative allows decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project to the impacts of not approving the proposed project. When the project contains the revision of an existing land use plan (here, the City of Carlsbad General Plan), the No Project Alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan into the future, limiting development to that considered under the plan. When the project is a development project on identifiable property, the No Project Alternative is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed, and the discussion would compare the environmental effects of the property remaining in its existing state without development against the effects that would occur if the project is approved.

For this EIR, an analysis of both the No Project: No Development; and No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Alternative are provided below.

## **7.1 ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO PROJECT: NO DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE**

### **7.1.1 Description of Alternative**

The No Project: No Development Alternative assumes that no development would occur on the proposed site and the site would remain vacant. This alternative would avoid most of the

significant environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project. This alternative is technically feasible; however, it does not meet any of the objectives of the proposed project as identified in Section 3.0 Project Description of this EIR. Additionally, this alternative does not meet the objectives of the City's General Plan, as the project site is identified for the following land use designations: Office and Related Commercial (O), Local Shopping Center (L), Open Space (OS), and Low-Medium Density Residential (RLM). Therefore, the City's General Plan expects development of the property at some point in the future. This alternative would not strengthen the City's tax base or provide shopping and job opportunities, would not ensure that the commercial services under the La Costa Master Plan are fulfilled, and would not offer additional residential areas with a range of housing types and prices. **Table 7.0-1** provides a comparison of Alternative 1 to the proposed project.

## **7.2 ALTERNATIVE 2 – NO PROJECT: EXISTING GENERAL PLAN, EXISTING MASTER PLAN, AND HCP ALTERNATIVE**

### **7.2.1 Description of Alternative**

The No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative assumes that the project site would be developed pursuant to the existing General Plan Land Use designations, La Costa Master Plan, and HCP. The existing general plan land use designations of the project site include Office and Related Commercial (O), Local Shopping Center (L), Open Space (OS), and Low-Medium Density Residential (RLM). **Table 7.2-1** provides a summary comparison of Alternative 2 to the proposed project.

### **7.2.2 Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Alternative to Proposed Project**

#### **Land Use and Planning**

This alternative would not avoid or reduce a significant impact to land use and planning as no significant land use and planning impact has been identified associated with the implementation of the proposed project.

**Table 7.2-1**  
**Summary Comparison of Alternative 2 - Existing General Plan,**  
**Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative to Proposed Project**

<b>Impact Category</b>	<b>Alternative 2 - Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative</b>
Land Use and Planning	No significant impacts for the proposed project.
Transportation/Circulation	Similar – this alternative would generate only 1 to 2% increase or decrease in daily traffic trips.
Air Quality	Similar – this alternative’s change in construction-related emissions and operational emissions would be minimal in comparison to total ADT generated by the project.
Noise	Similar – this alternative’s change in traffic-related noise would be minimal in comparison to existing ADT and the increase in ADT that would be generated by the project.
Paleontological Resources	Similar – this alternative would have a similar impact to paleontological resources because a similar level of site disturbance would occur.
Biological Resources	Similar – this alternative would have a similar impact to biological resources because the same biological resources would be impacted on the project site.
Hydrology/Water Quality	Similar – this alternative would affect the existing drainage patterns onsite in a way similar to the proposed project.
Geology and Soils	Similar – this alternative would be exposed to similar geotechnical conditions on the project site.
Hazards	Similar – this alternative would result in a similar impact associated with blasting and hazardous materials.
Visual Aesthetics/Grading	No significant impacts for the proposed project.
Public Services and Utilities	No significant impacts for the proposed project.
Global Climate Change	Greater – this alternative would result in a greater impact to global climate change because of increased emissions of greenhouse gases.

### Transportation/Circulation

This alternative would result in a similar transportation/traffic impact as compared to the proposed project. The project proposes 192 dwelling units (64 single-family and 128 multifamily units), which is an increase of 110 dwelling units in comparison to the number of single-family homes (82) that would be allowed on the project site under the existing General Plan and La Costa Master Plan. This results in an increase of 844 ADT in comparison to the existing General Plan and La Costa Master Plan. However, the proposed project would change approximately 2.6 acres from the Local Shopping Center (L) designation to Low-Medium Density Residential (RLM), which would result in a net reduction of approximately 1,300 ADT. In addition, the existing Office (O) designation is approximately 25 percent greater than the planned office area.



under the proposed project, which would increase the trip generation from 20 trips per 1,000 square feet of office use to 80 trips per 1,000 square feet of local shopping center use. While no precise development plan for Alternative 2 has been prepared, it can be estimated that any change in the total of 25,516 ADT generated by the project site under the proposed project would be approximately 1 to 2 percent increase or decrease in comparison to the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative.

### **Air Quality**

As stated under Transportation/Circulation, above, implementation of the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative would result in approximately 1 to 2 percent increase or decrease in ADT in comparison to the proposed project. Therefore, implementation of this alternative would result in a similar air quality impact as compared to the proposed project.

### **Noise**

As stated under Transportation/Circulation, above, implementation of the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative would result in approximately 1 to 2 percent increase or decrease in ADT in comparison to the proposed project. Therefore, implementation of this alternative would result in a similar noise impact as compared to the proposed project and the mitigation required to reduce the significant noise impact to a level less than significant would be similar to the proposed project. Temporary significant and unmitigated noise and vibration impacts related to blasting and drilling would be similar to the proposed project.

### **Paleontological Resources**

Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in a paleontological resources impact similar to the proposed project, since development of this alternative would require a similar level of grading and site disturbance as the proposed project.

## **Biological Resources**

Both the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative and the proposed project would be required to comply with the City's Habitat Management Plan (HMP). The General Plan and Master Plan designate 4.4 acres of open space (traversing the site in a northeast to southwest direction), while the proposed project would result in 3.7 acres of open space (traversing the site in north to south direction). In addition, 1.9 acres of open space would be provided in the multifamily parcel and 3.5 acres in the single-family parcel. Since Alternative 2 and the proposed project would impact similar existing biological resource sites, implementation of Alternative 2 would result in similar biological resources impact as the proposed project, regardless of the lesser amount of open space under Alternative 2.

## **Hydrology/Water Quality**

Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in a similar hydrology/water quality impact as the proposed project since development of this alternative would affect the existing drainage patterns onsite in a way similar to the proposed project. The drainage patterns would be affected due to factors such as grading and increased surface impermeability. The overall intensity and amount of runoff resulting from the implementation of Alternative 2 are expected to be similar to the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative would result in a similar hydrology/water quality impact.

## **Geology and Soils**

Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in geology and soils impacts similar to the proposed project since Alternative 2 development would be exposed to similar geotechnical conditions such as seismic-related hazards, erosion and loss of topsoil, unstable geologic units, or expansive soils as the proposed project. As well, similar grading and hillside development requirements would apply to this alternative. Therefore, the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative would result in a similar geology and soils impact.

## **Hazards**

Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in a similar hazardous materials impact as residential, office, and commercial uses allowed under this alternative would result in a similar

level of storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials as would the proposed project. While slightly more office space and less residential development would occur under this alternative, the increase in office space and decrease in residential uses would not significantly increase or decrease the level of hazardous materials stored, used, or disposed. Additionally, Alternative 2 would result in a similar risk of dam inundation and subject structures to flooding as the proposed project. Alternative 2 would further result in a similar hazards impact as the proposed project since development of this alternative would require blasting on the site similar to the blasting activities required by the proposed project development. As risk from wildfires, electromagnetic fields, airport operations, and conflict with emergency plans or operations was found less than significant for the project, these are not required to be considered for this alternative. Therefore, implementation of the No Project: Existing General Plan, Existing Master Plan, and HCP Alternative would result in a similar hazards impact as would implementation of the proposed project.

### **Visual Aesthetics/Grading**

This alternative would not avoid or reduce a significant impact to aesthetics/grading as no significant aesthetics/grading impact has been identified associated with implementation of the proposed project.

### **Public Services and Utilities**

This alternative would not avoid or reduce a significant impact to public services and utilities as no significant public services and utilities impact has been identified associated with implementation of the proposed project.

### **Global Climate Change**

Implementation of Alternative 2 would not result in a measurable change in emissions of greenhouse gas precursors associated with automobile trips generated from the alternative land use mix. Therefore, this alternative would result in similar impacts to Global Climate Change compared to implementation of the proposed project.

### 7.2.3 Conclusion

Alternative 2 is environmentally similar to the proposed project. This alternative would create fewer residential units, but potentially more shopping center and office space than the proposed project. This minor change in land use would generate only 1 to 2 percent more or less traffic than would the proposed project. All significant environmental effects associated with the project's traffic/circulation impacts (i.e., air quality, noise, and global climate change) would remain significant and subject to similar mitigation measures under Alternative 2. Land use, aesthetics, and public services and utilities impacts are less than significant impacts of the proposed project and are, therefore, not evaluated for this alternative. All other impacts associated with this alternative would be similar compared to the proposed project. Alternative 2 also does not meet certain project objectives such as offering well-balanced residential areas with a range of housing types, styles, and price levels.

## 7.3 ALTERNATIVE 3 – BIOLOGICAL OPEN SPACE ALTERNATIVE/ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

### 7.3.1 Description of Alternative

The Biological Open Space Alternative would result in the dedication of Biological Open Space to the east of the proposed Open Space Corridor in place of the proposed 64 single-family residential units. The remainder of the project would be developed with the same multifamily residential, shopping center, and office uses as the proposed project. **Table 7.3-1** provides a comparison of this alternative to the proposed project.

### 7.3.2 Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Alternative to Proposed Project

#### Land Use and Planning

This alternative would not avoid or reduce a significant impact to land use and planning as no significant land use and planning impact has been identified associated with the implementation of the proposed project.

**Table 7.3-1**  
**Alternative 3 - Summary Comparison of Environmentally Superior/  
 Reduced Impact Alternative to Proposed Project**

<b>Impact Category</b>	<b>Alternative 3 - Environmentally Superior/ Reduced Impact Alternative</b>
Land Use and Planning	No significant impact for the proposed project.
Transportation/Circulation	Less – this alternative would generate fewer daily traffic trips (approximately 640 fewer daily trips).
Air Quality	Less – this alternative would result in less construction-related emissions and operational emissions.
Noise	Less – this alternative would result in less of a noise impact because fewer daily trips would be generated.
Paleontological Resources	Similar – this alternative would have similar impact to paleontological resources because the same area of the site where such resources are potentially present would be developed.
Biological Resources	Less – this alternative would have less of an impact to biological resources because the single-family residential parcel would be designated as biological open space.
Hydrology/Water Quality	Less – this alternative would affect less of the existing drainage patterns onsite.
Geology and Soils	Less – this alternative would expose fewer residents to geology and soils impacts.
Hazards	Less – this alternative would result in less of an impact associated with blasting and hazardous materials.
Visual Aesthetics/Grading	No significant impact for the proposed project.
Public Services and Utilities	No significant impact for the proposed project.
Global Climate Change	Less – this alternative would result in fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

### Transportation/Circulation

Alternative 3 would result in less of a transportation/circulation impact as compared to the proposed project. Under this alternative, the 64 single-family residences would not be built, which would result in 640 fewer daily traffic trips. Therefore, the Biological Open Space Alternative would result in less of a transportation/circulation impact than would the proposed project.

## **Air Quality**

Implementation of this alternative would result in a lesser air quality impact as compared to the proposed project because Alternative 3 would result in less construction and 640 fewer daily traffic trips. As a result, this alternative would result in a lesser air quality impact than would the proposed project.

## **Noise**

Implementation of Alternative 3 would generate fewer daily traffic trips because the single-family residential parcel would not be developed and it would be preserved as biological open space. Therefore, the Biological Open Space Alternative would result in a lesser noise impact as compared to the proposed project. As well, the potential need for blasting and rock drilling would be reduced, resulting in less noise and vibration impacts from these sources.

## **Paleontological Resources**

This alternative would result in a similar impact associated with paleontological resources as the proposed project. The area preserved as biological open space under this alternative contains Santiago Peak Volcanics, which has no paleontological resource potential because of the magmatic origin of the rocks. Therefore, Alternative 3 would result in an impact associated with the paleontological resources sites similar to the proposed project, since the rest of the Alternative 3 project site (an area with potential paleontological resource sites) would be developed exactly the same as it would be under the proposed project.

## **Biological Resources**

Under this alternative, approximately 9.06 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub, 12.5 acres of nonnative grassland, 0.25 acre of disturbed ponded areas, and 0.03 acre of riparian scrub would be preserved as biological open space. Alternative 3 would designate approximately 24.4 acres (not including 1.9 acres on the multifamily parcel) as open space, while the proposed project would designate approximately 9.2 acres (not including 1.9 acres on the multifamily parcel) of open space. Additionally, Alternative 3 would preserve the areas identified as containing southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and California adolphia, and one ponded area. Direct impacts to these biological resources would, therefore,

be reduced under this alternative. However, indirect impacts from the similar adjacent commercial uses, lighting, noise, and increased traffic may be similar to the proposed project. Overall, implementation of the Biological Open Space Alternative would result in less of a biological impact than would the proposed project.

### **Hydrology/Water Quality**

This alternative would result in a lesser hydrology/water quality impact since the residential parcel would not be developed and would be preserved as biological open space. This alternative would retain the proposed single-family residential portion of the site under current undeveloped conditions and minimize impacts from diversion of runoff. The reduced development area would simultaneously lessen the impact from impervious surfaces and associated runoff and the amount of pollutants generated by residential land uses. Therefore, implementation of the Biological Open Space Alternative would result in a lesser hydrology/water quality impact.

### **Geology and Soils**

Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in a lesser impact associated with geology and soils since the residential parcel would not be developed and would be designated as biological open space. Therefore, implementation of the Biological Open Space Alternative would result in a lesser geology and soils impact.

### **Hazards**

This alternative would result in less of a hazards impact since implementation of this alternative would result in the preservation of the residential parcel as biological open space. As a result, no impact associated with household hazardous waste associated with the proposed 64 single-family homes would occur. Additionally, no seismic groundshaking and dam failure flooding hazards associated with residences on the residential parcel would occur since the parcel would be preserved as open space. As a result, implementation of this alternative would result in a lesser hazards impact.

### **Visual Aesthetics/Grading**

This alternative would not avoid or reduce a significant impact to aesthetics as no significant aesthetics impact has been identified associated with the implementation of the proposed project.

### **Public Services and Utilities**

This alternative would not avoid or reduce a significant impact to public services and utilities as no significant public services and utilities impact has been identified associated with the implementation of the proposed project.

### **Global Climate Change**

Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in fewer emissions of greenhouse gas precursors associated with fewer number of automobile trips generated from the alternative land use mix. Therefore, this alternative would result in less impact to global climate change than implementation of the proposed project.

#### **7.3.3 Conclusion**

Alternative 3 is the environmentally superior alternative and is also environmentally superior to the proposed project. Implementation of this alternative would result in less of an impact to transportation/circulation, air quality, noise, biological resources, hydrology/water quality, geology and soils, hazards, and global climate change. The impact to paleontological resources would be similar to the proposed project. Land use, aesthetics, and public services and utilities impacts are not required to be evaluated under this alternative. However, development according to this alternative would not meet certain basic objectives of the proposed project. The Alternative 3 project would not increase the City's tax base for residential uses as much as the proposed project, and would offer a lesser range of housing types, styles and price levels.